

Quality Versus Quantity

By Constance D'Arcy Mackay

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Throughout the block it was known that Mrs. McGinnis was as unobtrusive as she was thrifty. While the other women leaned from the windows of the tenement and gossiped of being clothes across the court and gaudied over the length of line, Mrs. McGinnis went quietly about her own business without a word to any of them. Indeed, some of her neighbors looked at her with awe, for in a tenement where everything is known the news soon spread that Mrs. McGinnis went out by the day to wash for people who moved in high circles of society.

Life went very cheerfully for Mrs. McGinnis. She had many things to be thankful for. Her two rooms were as neat as energy and soap could make them, her husband was sober and industrious, and they were putting away a tidy bit in the bank each month. She was thankful, too, that there were no little McGinnises to be "potholing" about and musing up the kitchen. She was not fond of children. When any of the little red-headed O'Shaunessys, who lived across the hall, were particularly clamorous Mrs. McGinnis was wont to remark that she was glad she had none of "the likes of them" to stay at home and take care of.

As it was, she set off blithely each morning with her scrubbing dress done up in a bundle and carried under her arm. Sometimes, through the generosity of her employers, she would return with a much larger bundle. Such occasions were gala nights, and Mrs. McGinnis could hardly wait to get home and open the wrappings on the kitchen table. There would be cuffs and socks and trousers as good as new for Mr. McGinnis, and such waists and skirts for herself that she was able to set the styles for the whole neighborhood.

Her only near rival in this was Mrs. O'Shaunessy, who appeared one Sunday in a plush hat nodding with green plumes. The following week Mrs. McGinnis went to church in a pink satin waist that had once been the bodice of a reception gown. It was elaborately trimmed with chiffon and artificial rosebuds and had elbow sleeves which displayed Mrs. McGinnis' muscular arms, ruddy from much contact with strong suds. Yet if there was anything ludicrous in the picture she presented she was entirely unconscious of it, and the gorgeousness of her apparel settled her supremacy as a leader of fashion.

But the feud between herself and Mrs. O'Shaunessy still continued. Mrs. O'Shaunessy used to strut up the aisle "for all the wurrld like an owl hen" with her numerous progeny trailing behind her, and she would shoot a glance over her shoulder at Mrs. McGinnis. Were not large families just as stylish as pink satin waists?

One evening Mrs. McGinnis came home with a larger bundle than usual. "Shure, it's a whole new wardrobe we'll be having," she said breathlessly. "I'm that excited I can hardly cut the strings! Here's waistcoats for ye, Pat, and some neckties and a foine silk hat. Fair, you'll look loike the mayor himself in it! And here's a dress for me. Silk lined it is too! Oh, it's myself that will make a fine rustle when I pass that O'Shaunessy woman! And maybe there's a waist to go with it!"

"Is it this ye mean?" said Pat, and held up something that neither of them had noticed—a small black velvet suit with lace cuffs and a wide lace collar. There were little black silk stockings, too, and patent leather slippers with gilt buckles.

Mrs. McGinnis looked at the outfit speechlessly. "Ye might sell it," said her husband. "Indeed, and I'll not," said Mrs. McGinnis.

"Ye can give it to Mrs. O'Shaunessy, then," suggested Pat. "I'll fit one of her youngsters!"

"Is it out of your mind ye are?" cried Mrs. McGinnis. "To think I'd be giving this suit to the likes of them! What would her red-headed spalpeens be doing with a lace collar and cuffs. I'd loike to know?" And Mrs. McGinnis snorted indignantly. To her mind these clothes were meant for a princeling, and none but a princeling should wear them.

That night, as she lay sleepless, she was haunted by visions of a little figure in a black velvet suit. Now he sat by the kitchen table, his fair hair shining under the lamplight; now he was walking by her side to church, so aristocratic that none of the tribe of O'Shaunessy could hold a candle to him. Suddenly unguessed longings and tenderesses began to stir. She wondered how it would seem to have some one to cuddle in the twilight, to feel a drowsy head against her breast. It would be sweet, she thought, to wake him in the morning and see his face all warm and flushed with slumber, his curls in a tangle about his neck. Later, when he was older, he would go to school and stand first in his class, while the little O'Shaunessys would be always, always at the foot. And, soothed by this pleasant reflection, Mrs. McGinnis fell asleep. Yet even her dreams were broken by the patter of tiny feet in patent leather slippers with gilt buckles.

With morning came a resolve which she did not see fit to impart to Pat, and by noon she set resolutely off on her quest, carrying a letter from the priest in one hand and dress suit case in the other. The sister at St. Margaret's Orphan asylum was accustomed to many startling requirements, but surely none were ever more astonishing than Mrs. McGinnis' demand for a

boy to fit a black velvet suit! As to his age or parentage Mrs. McGinnis did not seem to care. So long as the suit fitted that was all she asked. Then followed a strenuous half hour for some of the little orphans. There were many boys of assorted sizes. There were thin boys and fat boys, dark boys and fair boys, but a good fit seemed hopeless. Mrs. McGinnis watched the proceedings with a troubled eye. "Look at him," she would wail. "He's that chunky he'll be bursting the seams. If he moves an inch" or again, "Beggins your pardon, 'tis no bean pole I'm after wanting!"

She tried two more suitcases, with no better result. Despair settled down upon her. Was the surprise she had planned for Mrs. O'Shaunessy never to be? Must she go home baffled and dejected and give up all hope of the sensation she had planned to create? And a deeper feeling than all these tugged at her heart. The world seemed so full of children, and there was not even one for her! A sob rose in her throat as she began to fold up the velvet suit.

"I'll be leaving you with many thanks," she said huskily to the sister in charge, "for there's not wan of them that fits the suit at all, at all!" And even as she spoke there appeared before her the vision of her last night's dream—blue eyed and with crisp curls of gold—only this child was dressed in a checked gingham pinafore instead of velvet.

The child smiled engagingly at Mrs. McGinnis, who felt a great wave of love and longing sweeping over her. Such a brood of a boy! Here at last was one who would fit not only the velvet suit, but a niche that had long been vacant in her heart.

"What is your name, dear?" said Mrs. McGinnis tenderly. "Norah," said the child.

It was not at all the answer Mrs. McGinnis had expected, and the good woman gasped. But there was a wistful sweetness about the child which was not to be resisted. The love-light of awakening motherhood shone in Mrs. McGinnis' eyes.

"Will you be my little girl, darlint?" she whispered.

The night that Norah finally arrived Pat was as delighted as his wife. He thought he had never seen a "prettier little colleen." The next morning was Sunday and the McGinnises entered church somewhat late. Pat in the lead, wearing a tall silk hat and stepping very jauntily, Mrs. McGinnis next, moving with a notable rustle, and by her side a beautiful little girl whose black velvet coat, heavily trimmed with lace, was the admiration of all beholders. It was a day of triumph for Mrs. McGinnis. She beamed on Mrs. O'Shaunessy when they met face to face on the church steps.

"The top of the morning to you, Mrs. O'Shaunessy," quoth Mrs. McGinnis. "It's well ye're looking this fine day, and all your family. Shure, it's a large one, there's no denying it! But (with a glance of pride at Norah) it's myself that has always preferred quality to quantity!"

Gave Him His Time. A Kentucky congressman tells an interesting tale of the execution of a noted desperado in that state some years ago. Just before the sheriff adjured the noose he asked the usual question whether the man had anything to say.

"No, I think not," began the convicted one, when he was interrupted by a cheerful voice shouting:

"Say, Bill, if you ain't got anything special to say would you mind giving me fifteen minutes of your time just to let these good people know that I am a candidate for their suffrage, and—"

"Hold on, there!" shouted the sheriff. "Who's that?"

"John Blank," volunteered some one, naming a rising young politician, who has since represented his state for a number of years in the house of representatives at Washington.

"Who did he say it was?" whispered the condemned man to the sheriff.

"They say it's John Blank!"

"I thought I recognized John's voice," the desperado calmly remarked. "Well, he can have my time, all of it, but go ahead and hang me first and let him talk afterward."—Lippincott's.

Glycerin Was Considered Useless. No commercial commodity can show a greater increase in value, pecuniary or utilitarian, than glycerin. Originally a waste product eliminated in the manufacture of soap, candles and medicinal plasters, a nuisance to the manufacturer and a source of obstruction and pollution to river and sewer, it is now largely in request in almost every branch of industry. So great is the demand that the candle and other works can no longer yield the required supply of this commodity, and we now not only manufacture it on a large scale, but import it. It is used in medicine, in the arts, in perfumery, in the manufacture of beer, in calico printing, in the preparation of leather and as an antiseptic. Large quantities are annually absorbed in the production of nitroglycerin, dynamite and other explosives.

Mixed Fare For a Jury. A Maine jury had been out for some time on a case, and, as the supper hour was approaching, the presiding justice sent an officer to inquire if the jurors wanted their supper served in the room. It seems the jury stood it to 1, and the young man who was standing out against the rest of the panel answered the sheriff's knock at the door. In reply to the message from the judge the odd juror sent the following: "You tell the judge he can send one supper for me and eleven bales of hay for the eleven jackasses that are in bed with me."—Boston Herald.

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ODD WATER WHEELS.

Some Float on Streams—Huge Ones Make a River Lift Itself.

The people of Syria and Tiddis make their streams do things that Americans do not seem to have learned the secret of persuading the water course of this country to perform.

At Tiddis the natives have learned how to utilize the power of the current of the river Euphrate without building dams. What they have accomplished possibly might be done by an American farmer living on the banks of a rapidly moving stream and desiring a small, cheap power. The Caucasians build boats on the surface of the river. Into them are set water wheels. The whole affair is fastened to the bank in such a way that it will rise and fall with any change in the level of the surface of the river, so that the power is about constant all the time.

In Hama, the ancient "entering in of Hamath," the Syrians have accomplished a feat that makes one think of lifting oneself over a fence by tugging at one's bootstraps. They have harnessed the historic Orontes, or Nahr el Asi, as the Syrians call it, into the work of lifting itself many feet toward the zenith and trained it thus to water their fruitful gardens and orchards.

As for size, the water wheels which do this work are as to other water wheels what Niagara is to other waterfalls. As one stands by one of these great wooden frames revolving upon its wooden axle and looks up at its perimeter, forty feet above one thinks it large and is astonished when he turns his gaze up stream to see that relatively it is not a great wheel, for in the distance looms up one sixty feet in height. Even then he is not prepared for the spectacle of one ninety feet in diameter grunting around on its cumbersome axle just outside the town.

Life in Hama for some people is like the liking of others for olives, an acquired taste, because of these very water wheels. According as one feels about it, it is a musical city or one filled with nerve racking groans. Day and night without ceasing these massive, slow revolving structures utter speech. For those who have acquired a taste for their companionship the never ceasing tones are soothing, resembling the ocean roar or a slow fugue played on some cyclopean organ. The dissonant tones are deeper and louder than the deepest organ stop. Now they are in unison, now repeating the theme, one after another, now for a brief moment in a sublime harmony never to be forgotten, according to one traveler, then once more together in a tremendous chorus. The sounds are described as a slow movement up the scale, followed with a heavy drop to the keynote as: Do mi sol, do do do, do sol la, do do do. This unceasing Sapphic music, it is said, has been going on for a century at least.—New York Tribune.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

How hard a man falls after having been boosted too high!

When a man gets the baby to sleep, how proud he is of himself!

There is usually enough humiliation in all our lives to keep us modest.

It is not the stingy man who becomes a burden as age approaches; it is the spendthrift.

A pathetic admission older people often make is, "The romance has all been knocked out of me."

What has become of the old fashioned woman who called her friends "coppers" when they bought something like hers?

When a man is reasonably happy and content, it doesn't just happen. He is compelled to use common sense and work to an end.—Aitchison Globe.

Estimating a Horse's Height. The Arabs have two methods of estimating the height to which a colt will grow, the first being to stretch a cord from the nostril over the ears and down along the neck and compare this measurement with that from the withers to the feet, and the other method being to compare the distance between the knee and the withers with that from the knee to the coronet. In the first method it is considered that a colt will grow as much taller as the first measurement exceeds that of the second, and in the second method, if the proportion is as two to one, the horse will grow no taller.

Birds That Carry Their Young. The woodcock, it is said, has been known to carry away her young when threatened with danger. She places them on her spread feet, pressing them between the toes and the breast. A naturalist says many woodcocks also carry their young down to marshy feeding grounds in the evening, returning before dawn. In fact, they have no means of feeding their young except by carrying them to their food, for they cannot convey their food to them.

Not a Bombardment. Kissam—Has her papa ever fired you?

Higgins—He has never resorted to bombardment. His tactics are more in the nature of a passive blockade.

"How is that?"

"When I call to see his daughter he remains in the parlor during the whole of the interview."

Also When Is a Sen Dog? "Maw?"

"What is it, Johnny?"

"Do the ocean greyhounds ever bite the ocean tramps?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

It is very easy to get angry with somebody for doing what it would be very unreasonable for anybody to get angry over if you do it.

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